



## MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Safety Idea

Safety and  
Health are  
Values!

### Mining Near Gas Wells

Gas and oil wells are a hazard for underground miners if they are mined into. Mining into an oil or gas well may result in inundations or fires or explosions. Wells drilled prior to state laws requiring exact locations may be present, but unmapped, within mine boundaries. Abandoned wells are particularly difficult to locate. Accidents have occurred when wells have been inadvertently intercepted by mining. MSHA requires all oil and gas wells within the mining boundaries be identified and accurately located in advance of planned mining.

MSHA's recommendations for locating oil or gas wells are:

- Conduct a complete and comprehensive field survey and accurately plot the location on all mine maps.
- Search well owner information and databases.
- Review and compare geographic information such as various generations of topographic maps and aerial photographs.
- Search tax records, permits and other county or state databases for the history of royalty and other transactions regarding wells. Museums and historical sites may also be a source for records.
- Use scientific methods and instrumentation such as magnetometers to locate the traces of iron indicating past drilling activity.
- Contact local residents and representatives of gas well operators for information regarding knowledge of preexisting wells or drilling activity.



If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can email it to [zzMSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov](mailto:zzMSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov).

If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

The attached photo of the first gas well in West Virginia is reprinted with permission from the American Oil & Gas Historical Society, Washington, D.C.

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